

WHAT'S *On*

Thursday, August 22, 2002 Section 6

thestar.com

Critical Picks



Clubs

Starling proves it can still soar with release of new CD. Story by Ben Rayner, G8



Art

Angry young things aim to shock Art System visitors. Story by Peter Goodard, G10



Theatre

Maurice Godin takes on boy-boy role in *King Lear*. Story by Robert Crew, G8

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Man overboard

Flying high at 34, skateboard star Tony Hawk is the Martha Stewart of his sport

By KRISTINA LAVONNE

Like his sister sensation, Tony Hawk spends most of his time in the air.

Hawk, arguably the world's most accomplished professional skateboarder, is bringing his jaw-dropping skateboard skills to Toronto's St. Catharines tomorrow during the Argo game as part of his international tour.

Of course, no show is complete without his signature 900 move, which consists of a 360-degree double nosedive. It's one of more than 20 gravity-defying moves he's invented over his 18-year career.

What makes him so special? Watching Hawk explain the "900" on his Tony Hawk's Tip And Tricks video gives you a clue.

He's direct and confident—in a laid-back, geeky kinda way. His hairline is receding, and he's an

skinny young punk. But when he tricks a skateboard, it's like watching Fred Astaire begin the Rhapsody. As Hawk manipulates the board, it becomes a graceful, lithe, floating part of him. Did Ginger Rogers ever have a "bad" day?

If Hawk is the Astaire of the skateboard set, he is also the Martha Stewart. He is a master of merchandising. There

are Tony Hawk skate games, an action figure, books, a skateboard park, home videos, skateboarding clothing and gear, even a chain of Tony Hawk stores.

And at 34 years of age, with a wife and three kids, Hawk shows no signs of slowing down.

Says Cindy Bielek, marketing director for West 48, a line of Canadian skateboarding and snowboarding stores, "Tony Hawk is a world-class role model. He has three kids himself, he's very responsible and he's an amazing skater. The fact that he's still accelerating and getting better at his age is inspiring."

Like many athletes who've taken up the sport, he probably just can't stop.

Even Morisarty, 26-year-old skate team manager for West 48, says he's hopelessly hooked. "I tried to grow up a couple of years ago and failed miserably. It was the worst thing I've ever done. I tried wearing clothes that fit, got a real job and start saving for a house, and it all backfired."

"It's worse than an addiction. You can kick an addiction, you can't kick this."

Morisarty says Tony Hawk has longevity. "He's been around the longest, and he's transcended a lot of the trends. He's stayed at the top by being innovative and being a really great guy. He's become an international figurehead and representative of skateboarding to the mainstream."

Hawk is what's known as a vert skater, using vertical ramps and half-pipes. The other type of skateboarding is street skating, which is more popular, especially in Canada.

Building a vert ramp is expensive, you'd

★ Photo: Ken Berk, G8



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One Grand Prize:
A pair of tickets to the opening night performance at the Elgin Theatre on Tues., October 15 at 8:30 p.m.
Stomp stuff, backstage tour, meet the cast
APRIL 1994/95

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LOOK

Look around this ad to find the secret four-digit code.

LISTEN

Call StarPhone now 416-363-3080 and press the secret code to find out if you qualify for our random draw (every 50th call qualifies)

TO ENTER: If you qualify for our random draw, you'll be asked to leave all your names to your mailing address and phone number. It's the answer to a multiple-choice question: 238 - 2 x 2 (50 - 25 - 3) if your name is drawn as a winner. The Star will contact you by phone during normal business hours Tuesday, Oct. 8. Phone lines open until midnight, Thursday, Sept. 26.



TONY HAWK

Hawk an 'athlete with passion, dedication'

Continued from G1

need big warehouse space and the liability insurance is insane," says Mielke. "That's why there are only a handful in Canada."

But street skating has no boundaries, which is part of its appeal. "It bridges gaps. You have kids of all races skating, they'll cross an entire city to go to the worst part of town just to skate a handrail," says Moriarty.

All it takes is attitude and persistence. According to Moriarty, there are more golfing injuries than there are skateboarding injuries. "It's not that more golfers are getting hurt, but skateboarders just don't care," he says. "Golfers twist an ankle and it's an injury for life. A skateboarder twists an ankle, he'll walk it off, he'll try the trick again, he'll probably land it. They just don't give up."

He points to the futility of "skate stoppers," blocks and caps placed on handrails and ledges to prevent

skateboarding. "You can try to stop them, but you can't. Skateboarders adapt to anything. They don't care."

The average age of a skateboarder is about 15. "It's kids that are trying to break away from their parents and think for themselves," Moriarty asserts.

"They don't have to do any special exercises, there are no special rules. You don't have to be a nice guy, you don't have to be a slim guy, a good looking guy, you don't have to be smart."

Could turbocharged actor Vin Diesel really skate down a handrail on a silver serving tray like in the movie *XXX*?

Moriarty chuckles, "That's impossible. To be honest, it's ridiculous. That movie tried to wrap up extreme sports for the general population. But it doesn't even register on the radar."

"I'm pretty sure when Vin Diesel was pumping iron, he was making fun of skaters. It's good for him that he can make the same kind of money as skaters now."

That's where Tony Hawk comes in. "Hawk makes it legitimate. He's an incredible athlete with passion and dedication, and that's enabled him to bring this sport into the mainstream. He shows the world what it's really about."

Just the facts

WHO: Tony Hawk

WHERE: Argos vs Edmonton at SkyDome

WHEN: Tomorrow @ 5:15 p.m., 6:30 p.m. and half-time. Game begins at 7 p.m.

TICKETS: \$13 to \$44.50 (adults) at 416-872-5000 or www.ticketmaster.ca